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Mineral Industry Surveys

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ANTIMONY IN THE FIRST QUARTER 2005

Domestic consumption of primary antimony in the first quarter of 2005 was estimated by the U.S. Geological Survey to be about 2% greater than that of the fourth quarter of 2004 and about 5% less than that of the first quarter of 2004. During the January-February period, China remained the main source of metal and also ore-concentrate imports, while Mexico remained the main source of oxide imports.

Antimony prices rose moderately during the first quarter. The Platts Metals Week New York dealer price for antimony metal started the first quarter in the range of $1.33 to $1.37 per pound and rose slowly to finish the quarter in the range of $1.45 to $1.50 per pound.

The largest capacity domestic antimony smelter (La Porte, TX) closed at the end of 2004, as expected. The parent firm, GLCC Laurel LLC, a joint venture of Great Lakes Chemical Corp. (Indianapolis, IN) and Laurel Industries, Inc. (Dallas, TX), a subsidiary of Occidental Chemical Corp., had announced the closure in early 2004. The operations conducted at La Porte, TX, will be consolidated into the existing Great Lakes antimony production facility in Reynosa, Mexico. The closure leaves the United States with only one producer of antimony products, the United States Antimony Corp. (USAC), based in Montana.

In China, production returned to full capacity of 24,000 metric tons per year in April at Hsikwangshan Twinkling Star Co.'s Lengshuijiang City facilities in central Hunan Province. A power reduction at the company's North Mine and smelter had forced closure of these facilities and reduced company output by one half from early February to mid-March. Production had continued at the South smelter during the shutdown (Metal Bulletin Daily, 2005).

A consulting firm estimated that overall demand for flame retardants in the United States would show substantial growth. Freedonia Group Inc. (Cleveland, OH) projected that demand for flame retardants would increase 3.1% annually to more than 453,000 metric tons in 2008. Antimony trioxide sales were projected to increase 6.8% annually to reach $110 million by 2008 (Metal-Pages, 2005§[1]).

Reference Cited

Metal Bulletin Daily, 2005, Chinese antimony producer returns to full capacity: Metal Bulletin Daily, no. 8390, April 21, p. 3.

Internet Reference Cited

Metal-Pages, 2005 (March 23), U.S. demand for flame retardants flares, accessed April 7, 2005, via URL http://www.metal-pages.com.

[1]A reference that includes a section mark (§) is found in the Internet Reference Cited section.

TABLE 1
SALIENT ANTIMONY STATISTICS[1]

(Metric tons, antimony content, unless otherwise specified)

	2004		2005
	Total[p]	Fourth quarter	First quarter
Production:			
Primary smelter[2]	W	W	W
Secondary	4,150 [r]	1,050 [r]	W
Imports for consumption:	33,500	9,730	4,400 [3]
Ore and concentrate	1,750	139	20 [3]
Metal	8,270	2,290	965 [3]
Oxide[4]	23,500	7,310	3,420 [3]
Exports:	4,480	761	771 [3]
Metal, alloys, and scrap (gross weight)	566	142	97 [3]
Oxide[4]	3,910	619	674 [3]
Consumption of primary antimony	12,300 [r]	2,740 [r]	2,800
Price: Average cents per pound[5]	130.31	139.02	142.50
Stocks, end of period[6]	XX	2,010 [r]	2,040

[p]Preliminary. [r]Revised. W Withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data. XX Not applicable.
[1]Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits, except prices.
[2]Nearly all primary smelter output is antimony trioxide.
[3]Data for January and February only; March data were not available at time of publication.
[4]Antimony content is calculated by the U.S. Geological Survey.
[5]New York dealer price for 99.5% to 99.6% metal, c.i.f. U.S. ports.
[6]Producer and consumer stocks.

TABLE 2
INDUSTRY STOCKS OF PRIMARY ANTIMONY
IN THE UNITED STATES[1]

(Metric tons, antimony content)

	2004[2]	2005
Class of material	Fourth quarter	First quarter
Metal	W	W
Oxide	1,550 [r]	1,580
Other[3]	455 [r]	457
Total	2,010 [r]	2,040

[r]Revised. W Withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data.
[1]Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.
[2]Estimated 100% coverage based on reports from respondents who held 88% of the total stocks of antimony at the end of 2003.
[3]Includes ore and concentrate, sulfide, and residues.

TABLE 3
INDUSTRIAL CONSUMPTION OF PRIMARY ANTIMONY[1, 2]

(Metric tons, antimony content)

Class of material consumed	2004[2]		2005
	Total[r, p]	Fourth quarter[r]	First quarter
Oxide	10,500	2,440	2,370
Other[3]	1,840	299	428
Total	12,300	2,740	2,800

[p]Preliminary. [r]Revised.
[1]Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.
[2]Estimated 100% coverage based on reports from respondents who consumed 29% of the total antimony in 2003.
[3]Includes ores and concentrates, metal, sulfide, and residues.

TABLE 4
REPORTED CONSUMPTION OF PRIMARY ANTIMONY, BY CLASS OF MATERIAL PRODUCED[1]

(Metric tons, antimony content)

Product	2004[2]		2005
	Total[r, p]	Fourth quarter[r]	First quarter
Metal[3]	2,840	476	685
Nonmetal[4]	5,020	1,220	1,160
Flame-retardants:			
Plastics	1,790	480	335
Other[5]	2,700	562	624
Total	4,490	1,040	959
Total reported	12,300	2,740	2,800

[p]Preliminary. [r]Revised.
[1]Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.
[2]Estimated 100% coverage based on reports from respondents who consumed 29% of the total antimony in 2003.
[3]Includes ammunition, antimonial lead, bearing metals and bearings, cable coverings, castings, sheet and pipe, and solder.
[4]Includes ammunition primers, pigments, ceramics and glass, and plastics.
[5]Includes adhesives, pigments, rubber, and textiles.

TABLE 5
U.S. IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION OF ANTIMONY, BY CLASS AND COUNTRY[1]

(Metric tons, antimony content)

Class and country	2004			2005		
	Total[p, 2]	December	Fourth quarter	January	February	January-February
Ore and concentrate:						
China	1,380	59	139	--	20	20
Other	374	--	--	--	--	--
Total	1,750	59	139	--	20	20
Metal:						
China	5,820	426	1,940	216	237	453
Mexico	785	156	211	194	54	247
Peru	501	--	36	36	36	72
Other	1,160	17	105	162	30	192
Total	8,270	599	2,290	608	357	965
Oxide:[3]						
Belgium	1,750	45	349	84	150	235
China	10,700	1,120	3,590	845	447	1,290
Hong Kong	432	83	183	33	33	66
Mexico	9,590	997	3,060	726	1,040	1,770
South Africa	656	--	99	--	--	--
Other	323	2	31	52	7	59
Total	23,500	2,240	7,310	1,740	1,680	3,420
Grand total	33,500	2,900	9,730	2,350	2,060	4,400
Other antimony compounds (gross weight)	150	--	--	--	--	--

[p]Preliminary. -- Zero.
[1]Data are rounded to no more than three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.
[2]May include revisions to prior months data.
[3]Antimony content is calculated by the U.S. Geological Survey.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.